

## A Heart for Kingdom Treasure

Luke 12:32-34

October 11, 2020

I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Luke 12. We're going to be looking at the final few verses in what has been a hugely, hugely encouraging section. We're going to start reading back in Luke 12:13. I just want to read that whole section to get the fuller context in front of us. So look at Luke 12:13, "Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' But he said to him, 'Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?' And he said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'

"And he told them a parable, saying, 'The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, "What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?" And he said, "I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years: relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the

things you have prepared, whose will they be?" So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.'"

Those who do not fear God should say that they are in contrast in this text, in contrast in the life that we see. They are in contrast to Jesus' disciples, Jesus' disciples who do fear God. But for those who do not fear God, they are in the position of the man who, at the beginning of this intends to use Jesus for his own advantage, to leverage Jesus in this personal matter. They are like the fool in the parable, weighed down by a heart blinded by selfish greed. As we've been learning, covetousness darkens the heart, makes it ungrateful, stingy, miserly, anxious and weary. Covetousness is really the epitome of self-centeredness, which produces, contrary to expectation, produces loneliness. A covetous heart is a heart that is utterly blinded by pride and that is the condition of most of the people in this crowd. They're people who do not fear God, those who do not love him, worship him. They are those who do not follow Christ.

But to Jesus' disciples, he turns and speaks some encouraging words. He says, "Do not be anxious at all about

anything." Look at verse 22 and following. "Jesus said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?"

"Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith!" Listen, that's so much reason for us not to be anxious about anything. For those who fear God, for those who love and worship God, for those who follow Christ in discipleship, God takes such good care of his own, doesn't he? They have nothing whatsoever to worry about, nothing to be anxious about. God sustains his people through the lifegiving Word. He preserves his people with eternal life. He adorns his people in the

beauty of righteousness, perfect righteousness, the spotless righteousness of his beloved Son.

So based on the unshakeable, unchanging blessing and favor of God for us, Jesus calls his disciples to trust him, to trust him, to believe that he is speaking a word to them from another world, a world that they have not seen. He is saying, "Trust me, I know." He's calling his disciples to forsake a dying and decaying, decaying world, to set aside all its fleeting, dying pleasures and instead to seek the only thing that is permanent, the only eternal reality, which is the kingdom of God.

Look at verse 29. "And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'" What a word. What an astounding word. Jesus calls his disciples to seek the Father's kingdom and, by the way, this is exactly what he has been doing. This is exactly how he's been living his life. He

is calling us to do and to continue in the work that he has been involved in.

That is what he's deployed his apostles and evangelists to do, to proclaim what he's been proclaiming in the towns and the villages of Galilee and now here in Judea. He's going through all the towns that have been prepared by those evangelists. Jesus has been active. He has been so active. It's exhausting sometimes to read his itinerary. He's just been maintaining this full, full schedule, preaching the kingdom, demonstrating the power of the kingdom. He's been doing works of compassion, miracles, healing the sick, casting out demons. The power of the kingdom that's been operative in Jesus, it's been opening the eyes of blind people. It's been making the lame walk, cleansing lepers, making the deaf hear, raising the dead from their graves. And all of this, preaching the Gospel. All of it saturated with Gospel hope, Gospel truth.

In fact, that's what he said from the very beginning of his ministry, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me," for exactly this purpose he said, Luke 4:18, "To proclaim good news to the poor [...] liberty to the captives [...] sight to the blind [...] freedom

to the oppressed." He has come, "to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Listen, because this is not only important to notice, I want you to hear this. Just as a pattern of Jesus' life and ministry, hear this because this is the point of our passage today. This is what Jesus is calling us to do here and now, as well, in seeking the kingdom.

With heaven's bounty at his disposal, he is the Son of the living God. And so he has everything at his disposal and so what does Jesus do with it? He seeks the kingdom of God by sharing the kingdom with other people. That's the Messiah's stewardship. He has a stewardship given to him by God and he is trying to fulfill it. He's taking what God has given him and he is spreading it to other people. He is sharing it generously, magnanimously. And it is in the exercise of his stewardship by sharing God's infinite bounty with other people, that is its own reward for him.

"For it is more blessed to give than to receive." Where did Jesus come up with this idea? Well, humanly speaking, he simply read his Bible. He sees God's heart of compassion for people. And how is that not attractive to us? How is that not

compelling to us, to see how God cares for people? And for us to want to be involved in that work? So on a human level, Jesus is just simply mimicking what he's been seeing in God throughout the pages of Scripture. In his divine nature, again, Jesus does what he sees his Father doing. John 5:19, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing on his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise." So whether in his human nature or his divine nature, he's just doing what the Father's doing.

Beloved, that's what we're going to learn about today. How to follow Jesus Christ as he follows the heart of his Father. This is how we, like him, will have a heart for the kingdom of God. How we'll have a heart for kingdom treasure, how we seek, find, and share that treasure with others and how we are ourselves with our lives invest for eternity. That is really the secret of kingdom economics, that the more you give away, the more you keep. It's what Jim Elliott discovered early in his life. It's what he practiced to his dying day. It's what he sealed with his blood. He who, he is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose. That's what I want for us. That's what we, as elders, have been praying for us. Praying that we'll see this message from Jesus, and we'll

understand it, we'll embrace it, that it will go deep and saturate every fiber of our being, that we'll learn to practice in the life of our own church, to join in Jesus' work, to seek the kingdom of God, to share that kingdom goodness with other people. What else is there to live for? To demonstrate Jesus' compassion, Christ's compassion, God's compassion with others, and then combine that compassion and care by preaching the hope of salvation in Christ. That's what we're after.

So I've got only two points for today and you might think, "Hey, short sermon!" Nope. No, it's going to be a short sermon. Two points. My points are long, and the second point has seven sub-points. Get your Bibles ready because we're going to answer two main questions and the first question starts with this. We want to ask, "What is this kingdom?" What is this kingdom, I mean what are we supposed to get so worked up over? What are we supposed to be so thrilled with? What is this kingdom, anyway? The disciples thought they knew exactly what Jesus meant when he spoke of the kingdom. We'll read a little later that Jesus had to correct them about a few particulars, and some of those particulars had major, major implications.



Still, the disciples did have the basic gist about the nature of the kingdom. We don't. Not many of us, anyway. We don't. We've grown up in this county. It's not a kingdom. We've grown up with a government that's what? Of the people and for the people and by the people. It's a representative democracy, a constitutional democracy. So for most of us, the closest kingdom that we know is that benign version across the pond, right? The kingdom of Great Britain. It's a constitutional monarchy. So we really only what we've seen on TV or what we've read in the tabloid papers or whatever. We don't know much about what a true kingdom is about and even the constitutional monarchy of Great Britain, they've defanged all the power of the monarchy. So there's just not a whole lot of power there. It's mitigated by a written document.

But there are six absolute monarchies left on the earth. A monarch has an absolute sovereign authority and power, ruled by a king or a Sultan. Brunei, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Eswatini, that's the new name of Swaziland, Africa, and then also believe it or what is on the list, the Vatican. The Vatican is a monarchy ruled by the Pope. There's something wrong about that, isn't there? Just on the face of it. Since very few of us have lived in such places or even traveled to them, it's safe

to assume that the concept of a kingdom is still pretty foreign to us as Americans. The disciples, though, they understood some of this.

Not only the concept of a kingdom was familiar to them, but the idea of the specific kingdom that Jesus was preaching, that Jesus commanded to them to go and preach. They knew it. Jesus, after all commissioned the Twelve to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal, Luke 9:2. He sent in the next chapter, Luke 10, he sent the 72 to heal the sick and to say, "The kingdom of God has come near you." So what do they preach if they're preaching the kingdom of God? Well, the phrase, "the kingdom of God," it refers to a monarchy where God is the absolute sovereign authority. He is the one who has power over life and death. He's the one who sits on the throne.

So in terms that we can understand of a constitutional democracy, God is all three branches of government: legislative, judicial, executive. God is the government, lawgiver, judge, and executor of righteousness. Israel, it's the only nation on earth that God chose to rule, that God chose for the nation where his name would reside, that God chose as the nation where

his glory would be manifest in and through that nation. So Israel as God's chosen nation was there to administrate his sovereign rule on the earth, to convey through it its blessing and glory and spread it around the earth. So properly speaking, we need to see that Israel's monarchy is actually a theocracy since God is the absolute sovereign. He is the lawgiver, he's the judge, he's the executioner.

The judges of Israel, then later the kings of Israel, those offices of Israel's government were administrative in nature. They were God's agents to administrate and to enforce his justice and righteousness in the land. Now we're not going to have time to review Israel's entire history this morning, but it's enough for our purposes to say that this Israel had in its history some agents who were better at this and some agents who were worse at this. In fact, some agents who were downright wicked in their administration of justice and righteousness. They did not, you know, for a large part, Israel did not administrate God's kingdom on earth well. We can just leave it there. Not one of them was a perfect representative. Not one of them was a perfect king, perfect administrator. Israel's monarchy was never a perfect theocracy of God. It was never an

exact manifestation of the kingdom of God. In fact, it fell far short.

The nation of Israel, as we've seen on the pages of Scripture, it went the way of all nations. It often paralleled and at times even outdid the idolatry of the pagan nations and the immorality as well. Paul put it this way, Romans 2:24, "As it is written the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you." What an indictment. So God eventually judged Israel for its sins, its idolatry, its acts of gross immorality. But also for its rebellion against the superior light of revelation that they had received as a nation. Even though after this, God sent the nation into exile, God was gracious all the way through. He sent prophets along the way to encourage and strengthen the faithful remnant. In the larger population, to call them all to repentance so they would throw themselves in the dust, repent of their sins. They didn't do that. So the prophets were there for another purpose and that was really the purpose of strengthening the faithful remnant. Before, during, after Israel's expulsion from the land and its exile into Babylon, God sent word through the prophets that restoration was coming.

So the faithful remnant, they heard words of hope and they so needed those words of hope. Things looked so, so dark all around them. And yet, because of God's promise, they had hope. Hope that is proclaimed as good news to them. And that good news was coming in the form of Messiah, the promised son of David. This one who would make the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Israel one. It is the same message for us, by the way, it's no different. In our darkest hour, whenever that darkest hour comes, whenever the bottom is the bottom for us, there's still hope in the Messiah.

In fact, I want you to turn back for a moment to Isaiah 52 and I just want to take a brief look at some of this so you can get an idea of what the disciples were thinking as they're hearing Jesus talk about seeking the kingdom. Those of you who've been keeping up with the daily Bible reading, you may find this familiar as we've recently finished Isaiah. Starting in Isaiah 52, we're going to read a little bit here. Isaiah 52:1, this promise of restoration, a promise of deliverance and salvation for Israel. You need to understand the disciples of Jesus listening to him this day, they took this literally. They understood this literally.

Isaiah 52:1, "Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion; put on your beautiful garments. O Jerusalem, the holy city; for there shall be more come into you the uncircumcised and the unclean. Shake yourself from the dust and arise; be seated O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion. For thus says the Lord: 'You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.' For thus says the Lord God: 'My people went down at first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing. Now therefore what have I here,' declares the Lord, 'seeing that my people are taken away from nothing? Their rulers wail,' declares the Lord, 'and continually all the day my name is despised. Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here I am.'

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns.' The voice of your watchman—they lift up their voice; together they sing for joy; for eye to eye they see the return of the Lord to Zion. Break forth together into singing, you waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord has comforted his people; he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy

arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God."

The fulfillment of these restorations promises and many like this, along with the administration of this restored kingdom would rest on the strong capable shoulders of the Messiah. That's what it says in Isaiah 9:6. We say that every Christmas time, right? "The government will rest upon his shoulders." It's this Messiah that God speaks of it in verse, look at verse 13. "Behold, my servant," he's expressing confidence, he's rejoicing in the Messiah. "Behold, my servant shall act wisely; he shall be high and lifted up, he shall be exalted." In fact, as you look down the page there and let your eyes scan the verses that follow, you realize we're entering into territory that we know, Isaiah 53, the suffering servant.

Messiah's kingdom mission begins with the king dying for his citizens. I mean who's heard of that? A monarch dying for his people. This is not typically how the story goes. But the Messiah, Jesus the Christ, he comes to secure the allegiance of his people with the unbreakable bond of love. He's come to secure permanent forgiveness for them by taking upon himself the

due suffering for their sins. Though Israel failed to administer God's righteousness, they themselves were unrighteous from the heart. They're guilty before God. But the Messiah's sacrifice removed their guilt. His obedience secured their perfect righteousness before God, their standing before God. It's the greatest gift a king could ever give his citizens.

I'd love to read the whole chapter, but just look at Isaiah 53 at the end of it, verse 11. "Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities." In other words, the king, he takes upon himself the penalty that they deserved. He absorbs the wrath of God, the sovereign, the absolute sovereign authority and power, lawgiver, judge, and executioner, he absorbs that wrath and then he secures their righteousness so that selfsame sovereign can declare this people righteous in his sight, justified. Not simply forgiven, declared righteous. It's a positive element there.

Just for a moment, can you imagine America being the target of this promise? Current population nearing three hundred



thirty million, every single citizen counted righteous before God, in our country. Sin forgiven; righteousness fulfilled in the work of Christ for us. Consciences clear, no longer defiled by sin and dead, evil works, hearts regenerated by the Holy Spirit. We have new natures. Three hundred thirty million people, new natures, new affections. We possess a love for truth, a love for righteousness. Every person has a love for his neighbor. Every heart in union with gratitude and joy neighbor to neighbor rejoicing in the salvation of the Lord, communing with God through Christ, fellowshiping together in worship and praise. I mean block parties like you've never seen. Got the picture? It's hard to imagine that, isn't it? Today, today's environment?

I know it's hard to imagine but try to imagine that now as a reality through the entire earth. Every single nation of the world. That's what the kingdom of God looks like. It starts with an earthly kingdom, a kingdom that governed by the Messiah on earth and then it culminates in the fulfilled promise of a new heavens and new earth, 2 Peter 3:13, "in which righteousness dwells." All over the earth.

So you're still in Isaiah, just a flip ahead a couple chapters, a few pages over to Isaiah 60. Again, we're just going to read a little bit here. We're going to look at two stages in this coming kingdom. This is what the disciples, they saw all the peace, all one thing, one kingdom. We understand it is two stages but look at what they understood when Jesus spoke of the kingdom. First, it was an earthly kingdom. Look at Isaiah 60 starting in verse 1. "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

"Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip. And you shall see and be radiant; your hearts shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. A multitude of camels shall cover you, young camels of Midian and Ephah; those from Sheba shall come. They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall bring good news, the praises of the Lord. All the flocks of Kedar

shall be gathered to you; the rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you; they shall come with acceptance to my altar, and I will beautify my beautiful house.

"Who are these that fly like a cloud and like doves to their windows? For the coastlands shall hope in me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from afar, their silver and gold with them, for the name of the Lord your God, and for the Holy One of Israel because has made you beautiful. Foreigners shall build up your walls, and their kings shall minister to you; for in my wrath I struck you, but in my favor I have had mercy on you. Your gates shall be open continually; night and day they shall not be shut, that my people, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve you shall perish." God's going to judge nations that don't conform to his plan, to exult Israel. Whose "nations shall be utterly laid waste."

Verse 13, "The glory of Lebanon shall come to you, the cypress, the plane, and the pine, to beautify the place of my sanctuary, and I will make the place of my feet glorious. The

sons of those who afflicted you shall come bending low to you, and all who despised you shall bow down at your feet; they shall call you the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas you have been forsaken and hated, with no one passing through, I will make you majestic forever, a joy from age to age. You shall suck the milk of nations; you shall nurse at the breast of kings; and you shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

“Instead of bronze I will bring gold, instead of iron I will bring silver; instead of wood, bronze, instead of stones iron. I will make your overseers peace and your taskmasters righteousness.” What a picture. “Violence shall no more be heard in your land, devastation or destruction within your borders; you shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates Praise.” What an earthly kingdom. Imagine that around the whole earth. Neighbor to neighbor, county to county, state to state, throughout the nation, nation to nation, this.

This is the earthly kingdom of the Messiah when Christ returns to reign and rule from David's throne in the city of Jerusalem. We call this kingdom the Millennial Kingdom because

it lasts for a literal millennium, a thousand years, according to Revelation 20. Satan will be bound up in chains, cast into the abyss, a bottomless pit. The destroyer will be destroyed, the dominator dominated. Christ reigning, it will be a time of unparalleled peace and prosperity.

Look at Isaiah 65, just a few pages over. Verse 19 and following. It says something very similar. "I will rejoice in Jerusalem be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed. They shall bring houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They shall build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another ear; for like the days of a tree shall the day of my people be, my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain or bear children for calamity, for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord, and their descendants with them. Before they call I will answer; while they are yet speaking I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall

be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain,' says the Lord."

All of those verses, and there are more we could read, but all those verses are about the earthly millennial kingdom. That's what Jesus' disciples have in mind. You've got to imagine their thrilled. Here he is! Here's the kingdom! Here's the Messiah, the king himself! Just briefly, there's more to this. Back up and notice. This is what they're seeing, too. Verses 17 and 18, same chapter, Isaiah 65, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, and her people to be a gladness."

There's such language back up to chapter 60, we just read from, verse 19, there's language of an eternal kingdom in Isaiah 60:19 as well. It says there that, "The sun shall be no more your light by day, nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the Lord," Yahweh, "shall be your everlasting light, your God will be glory. Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the Lord will be your everlasting

light, and your days of mourning shall be ended." Those passages are fulfilled in particular in Revelation 21 and 22. As the kingdom of comes into its final form, an eternal kingdom, a new heavens', a new earth, all lit by the eternal glory of God. Jesus' disciples, they knew these passages from Isaiah.

In fact, in dark times of Roman oppression, in times when their nation seems to be tearing itself apart, or even terrorists rising up from different parts of their land to try to assassinate leaders and bring about the kingdom, this is what they fed themselves with. This is what the disciples hoped in. this is what the disciples held onto. They looked forward with hopeful, joyful anticipation. Ever since John the Baptist came into the land, very different from what they'd been hearing for the past couple hundred years. John the Baptist comes, and he says, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and then he spoke like no one else had been speaking for a long, long time. He started to sound a lot like their prophets written in Scripture.

And then comes Jesus. He comes through their town, through Capernaum, calling them to discipleship. Their hearts are

pounding now with excitement and joy to be a part of this. They didn't recognize, like we do, there'd be a gap in the program between the Millennial kingdom and the eternal kingdom. A gap, you know, a separation between those. They didn't understand there'd be a gap between then, their time, and the kingdom coming, the second advent of Christ. They didn't realize that God intended Christ to come twice. A first advent for the forgiveness of sins to deal with the deep heart-work of the people, to fulfill all righteousness, to secure justification for its kingdom citizen. And then to have a second advent of Christ to consummate all the promises of restoration and all the promises of kingdom fulfillment.

We understand that because we have the whole written word before us. We are in a privileged position. They only started to realize the breadth of God's redemptive program when they came together after the resurrection. Remember, Acts 1:6, they're all gathered together, Jesus has been crucified, buried, all is lost. It's all gone. All of the sudden, resurrection, their hearts are filled with joy. They see him. They walk with him. Just before his ascension, the apostles, filled with anticipation and joy, asked Jesus, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" "All right, are we getting



going with this?" Then he answered, "It's not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father's fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." And they're like, "Oh, yeah. Those promises. Okay, forgot about the Holy Spirit and his involvement. Didn't even see that coming."

"And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Hmm. Righteousness covering the earth is going to start with a proclamation of righteousness to the earth. In answer to the disciples' question, "Is this time, now the time you're going to restore everything?" Jesus says, "Not yet. Not yet. Let's leave the timing to the Father and let's, you and me, let's us work on seeking the kingdom of God. And since it's been your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, there is a kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world, let's seek that together. Let's keep on living for the kingdom. Let's keep working for its fulfillment."

Listen, the apostles, these early disciples of Christ, for them, this must, it must have seemed to them like a postponement

of fulfillment of kingdom promises. But listen, it was not that. This is all happening according to plan. After Jesus helped them reorient their minds to God's program, to his sovereign purposes for the church and the church age, that they would be privileged to see the advent and the growth of a body of Christ, Jew, Gentile together, slave and free together, male, female together, equal citizens together. Man, they are all in. that's the record of the Book of Acts.

They're like, "We get to do this. This is our role." And once the Holy Spirit came, filled them, indwelt them, empowered them to serve Jesus Christ, they got it. They got it. It didn't diminish their joy one bit to wait for the Millennial Kingdom. Nah, their joy deepened. Their vision of God's program expanded, broadened because they're seeing in Christ and in his work, they're seeing the very wisdom of God manifest before them and the glory of Christ on display in the church. They're overjoyed to be counted worthy to be a part of this.

Beloved, what about you? I mean up until the world shuttered at this stoppage that was caused by a tiny little thing like Covid. All the panicked reaction to Covid. We don't

scoff at that by the way. I'm not scoffing. The uncertainty of all of this has affected us too. But up until then, can you admit to having been a little bit distracted by the world, just a little bit? A little bit caught up in what's going on around you? A little bit caught up in earthly pursuits? Do you look back and do you ever wonder like, "Man, I used to really watch a lot of NFL and NBA. Who cares about that anymore?" I mean, seriously, sports figures, entertainment people, they have nothing to say to us at this time at all. Every time they try to insert themselves into the situation, we're like, "Why are you still talking as if anybody cares?" Can we confess that we, maybe we're too preoccupied, far too preoccupied by this world, by this agenda, by what counts as important?

Beloved, you've got to understand. This is our opportunity right here. This is our opportunity. Christ stopped everything in the world so we could think about this more carefully, so we can get our heads screwed on straight, our hearts rightly aligned, get back in the game and rejoice at the opportunity that we have before us to seek this kingdom in our day and our time, our own place. We got work to do. In joyful obedience to Christ, we have a kingdom to seek. And so with that in mind, let's ask a second question for this morning. This is part two

here. What does seeking the kingdom look like? What does seeking the kingdom look like? What is the right response to receiving God's precious gift of a kingdom? What demonstrates that you no longer fear, no longer worry, are no longer anxious, but that your priorities are now set by eternal realities.

Look at verses 33, 34. Jesus says, "Here's what it looks like, 'Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'" Folks, where is your treasure? Where is your treasure located? Where do you bank? What is the security of what's most valuable to you? Listen, if it's located anywhere on the face of this planet, if it is oriented to all the fading and fleeting life of this world, then you have invested poorly.

James says in James 5:1-3, "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up

treasure in the last days." Foolish to do that. Bad investment to put all your time, all your energy, all your efforts into amassing wealth here. You need to get your resources while you still can. Withdraw from this world. See this time and energy and resources that you have as a stewardship and then reinvest the talents that your master gave to you to into kingdom ventures.

Notice first in that section back in Luke 12. I need to get there, Luke 12:33, 34. Notice first what Jesus tells us. Jesus tells us what to do. He tells us what actions to take, practically speaking. "Sell your possessions and give to the needy." And we're going to clarify the meaning of that in just a moment for us. So he tells us what to do, what actions to take.

Secondly, Jesus tells us the significance of our actions. We're investing in the future. We're investing in invisible unseen realities but make no mistake because they're invisible and unseen that they don't matter. They matter so much more consequentially than anything visible, anything physical, anything temporal. We're tucking away an infinite unfailing treasure. We're storing the riches of heaven in imperishable

wallets and indestructible purses, which can never be stolen, which can never wear out. No one can hack this bank.

And third, Jesus tells us what our actions reveal about our hearts, namely that our hearts in the right place. Rather than being estranged from God like those still enslaved to covetous desires, when we treasure the kingdom that God has already given us, listen, our hearts are aligned to worship God, to find all joy, satisfaction, and rest in him. So let's put all that together in a little list here, okay, these verses. Just assess ourselves and see whether or not we're seeking the kingdom, see how we're doing at this.

We're going to start with that first sentence in verse 33, "Sell your possessions, and give to the needy." We need to clarify that. What it meant for the disciples then and what it means for us now. We're going to that by highlighting some principles for them, first of all, to apply to our lives. Ready to write? Here we go, number one, first, first principle: Be diligent, work hard and build wealth. First principle: Be diligent, work hard and build wealth. And you're looking down at the verse and you're saying, "In light of what Jesus says here,

'Build wealth'?" Yes. Absolutely. Be diligent, work hard and build wealth. Notice when Jesus says, "Sell possessions," what does that imply? You have possessions to sell. Make no mistake. Jesus' disciples had possessions. That's how they funded the ministry. The Apostles had a shared purse, carefully managed by the trustworthy, every frugal Judas Iscariot. He kept track of the money.

Even after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, Christians in the early church, they had possessions, too. They clearly didn't interpret what Jesus said here with a communist hermeneutic over the mendicant, which is a beggarly vow of poverty hermeneutic. It's not how they thought. Turnover, let me show you this in Acts chapter 2. Acts 2, remember while you're turning there, that Jesus called these disciples to deny themselves and take up their crosses and follow him. And that is exactly what they did. They left everything, quite literally left everything to follow Jesus. They went where he went. They slept where he slept. They put everything on the line to follow him.

Frederic Godet put this well. He said, "If they had remained attached to the soil of their earthly property, they would have been incapable of following and serving him without looking backward. The essential character of such a precept alone," he's speaking about, "Sell your possessions, give to the poor." "The essential character of such a precept alone is permanent. The form in which Jesus presented it arose from the present condition of the kingdom of God, the mode of fulfilling it varies." In other words, we need to, in our interpreting Scripture at times, we need to boil down the command to its principle form and use wisdom to see how that principle applies for us in our own time and in our own situation. There are times an obedience to this command requires us to sell everything and give. At other times, the same command requires us to hold down a job and earn a living and save money and fund kingdom purposes.

So when Jesus says, "Sell your possessions, and give to the needy," he is not here advocating some kind of Francis of Assisi vow of poverty. It does not support of a communist denial of personal property where all goods and property belong to the collective and it's doled out by hire-ups in the state. That's why I appreciate so much in Luke's body of writing where he



gives us Volume One: The Gospel of Jesus and Volume Two: The Acts of the Apostles, because we get to see how the early church applied Jesus' words, Jesus' teaching. Look at Acts 2 starting in verse 41, "So those who received his word," Peter's word, Peter's gospel. They, "were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common." That's where the communists stop reading.

But keep reading. Verse 45, "They were selling their possessions and belongings, and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need." That's where the Franciscans and the monastic beggars stop reading. Keep reading. "And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." Where were they breaking bread again? Hmm. "In their," well, that's a possessive pronoun, calls attention to the fact of, you guessed

it, possession. "In their homes." They still had homes. They still had possessions.

Listen, these are diligent, hard-working people who built wealth, had stuff to share. And we could read about this all over the New Testament. Just as an example, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12. You can write that down, 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12. Paul says, "We urge you, brothers, to [...] aspire to live quietly," or "make it your ambition," in other words. "To live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we have instructed you, so that you may walk properly before outsiders and be dependent on no one." There is no justification biblically, there is no justification whatsoever for Christians taking vows of poverty, for Christians living like the rest of their lives on handouts, feeding like a leach from hard work of other people. That is not godly. That is not piety. That's not biblical. We all need to be diligent, find ways to work hard and to build wealth.

Jesus' disciples had already applied the command, "Sell your possessions." They applied it quite literally because that is what the moment demanded. If they didn't, they would not

have been able to follow his circuitous route to Jerusalem. Other Christians in the New Testament, most of them in fact, they're called to hold down jobs, be diligent work hard, build wealth. And then share it. How else do we fund gospel ministry? How else do we train competent preachers of the Word of God? How else do we deploy well-trained pastors, well-trained missionaries to build churches? If God's people divest themselves of everything, you do that one time, and they're you're begging.

So instead of taking Jesus' words in some strictly wooden, literal fashion, which is really to do violence to the intent here, we need to see Jesus' words complimented and applied in what Paul said to the Corinthians. Just write down 1 Corinthians 7:29-31. 1 Corinthians 7:29-31. Paul says there, "The appointed time has grown very short." And by the way, just a little bit of historical background, at this time in Corinth, when Paul is writing to Corinth, there's a crisis of pretty significant proportion. There had been a famine and social crisis swept through. I mean when people are starving, they start pointing fingers, don't they? They start getting angry. They start saying, someone's got to do something about this. Riots were going on in Corinth. Christians are starting to wonder, I mean

should we even marry, be given in marriage? Should we even commit our daughters to marriage to other people? I mean should we stop carrying on conjugal relations between husband and wife? I mean, Christ is coming! Look, it's the end times. This world is tearing itself apart.

So Paul says, "The appointed time [it] has grown very short." You need to think that way. "From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away." And you might be saying, He's jumping on the crisis train. He's not, because at the very beginning of the chapter he's saying, Look, stop denying yourselves, husband and wife. Give yourselves to conjugal relations, enjoy your marriages. Don't give the devil an opportunity to tempt you. No, here's who should marry, here's who should not. If there's a virgin daughter of yours that wants to be married, if the two of them, young couple want to get married, I know the times are tough, let them get married. You've not sinned." Look, there's a balance there, isn't there?

But the world is passing away, make no mistake, in Corinth and in Greeley. "It's passing away along with its desires," 1 John 2:17, "But whoever does the will of God abides forever." So much more to say about this, but we've got six more points to cover. So be diligent, work hard, and with the wealth that you earn, just insert a practical matter here because it's assumed in the text here, just a practical matter, second: Be responsible and care for your family. Be responsible and care for your family. Listen, before you give alms to the needy, before you're concerned about the poor, make sure you've taken care of your responsibilities at home.

Paul tells young Pastor Timothy to care for widows, 1 Timothy 5. They're the most vulnerable members of any society, especially in the First Century, harsh world. Paul tells Timothy there about caring for widows and it's not just pull out all the stops and just pour money on them. He says, before they're added to the widow's list, before they're made a charge of the church, do this, "If a widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents, for this is pleasing in the sight of God." Then verse 8, "If anyone does

not provide for his relatives, especially for members of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever." So just squeeze in the point just slightly here, before you look outside of your home, be responsible in your home.

Third point: Be compassionate. Be compassionate and look to meet needs. Be compassionate and when I say, "Look to meet needs," I mean be on the lookout. Make that a preoccupation of yours to say, "Hmm, who can I give to? Where are the needs? Who can I care for?" Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "This is the heart of your Father in heaven." Luke 6:36, "Be merciful, even as your father is merciful." We're to, "Put on," Colossians 3:12, "as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved," we're to put on, "compassionate hearts, a heart of kindness," that looks out for those in need." That's the instinct of love itself. 1 John 3:16, "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for others, for the brothers," it says.

"But if anyone has this world's goods and sees his brother in need, and yet closes his heart against him, how does God's

love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk," a lot of talk going around. Let us love instead in, "but in deed and in truth." Paul says, Galatians 6:2, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the laws of Christ." He tells us to prioritize our compassion. In verse 10, "So then as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." Prioritize your compassion, prefer those who are in the household of faith in your generosity, your giving, your care for the poor.

Paul modeled that for all the churches in all of his ministry. In fact he reminded the Ephesian elders, Acts 20:35, he says, "In all things I have shown you that working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" That's the way Jesus lived. That's the way Paul lived. Paul wanted the Ephesian elders, all pastors under his influence, to model and to teach the same thing in all the churches. He told the pastor, Titus, teach compassion, help people look for needs they can meet. Titus 3:14, "Let our people learn to devote." It's not something you just have by instinct, right? You've got to learn it. You've got to be disciplined in this. "Let our people learn to devote themselves

to good words, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful." So listen, be looking for it. As they say, "See a need, meet a need."

So be diligent, be responsible, be compassionate. Point number four: Be generous and share your stuff. Be generous and share your stuff. I'd say even more, not just share, but give your money. Give it away with no strings attached. Give. John the Baptist, when he taught the crowds to bear fruit in keeping with repentance, they asked him for some practical application. He immediately had it. He said, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none. Whoever has food is to do likewise." And there should be no need in the body of Christ. Be generous, share, give. The theme shows up in the Law and the Prophets again and again, share with the needy, share with foreigner, share with orphans and widows. Moses said, Deuteronomy 24:19, "When you reap your harvest in your field and you forget a sheaf in the field, don't go back and get it. Just leave it there. It shall be for the sojourner, for the fatherless and the widow that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands." So don't try to be squeezing everything out. Just let the poor gather and glean the field.



David said, "The wicked borrows, but does not pay back." A lot of wickedness going on in our country, isn't there? A lot of people borrowing and never repaying. Psalm 37:21, "But the righteous, the righteous is generous and gives." Solomon, likewise, Proverbs 3:27-28. He says, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbor, 'Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it'—when you have it with you." You see a need, don't tell your neighbor to come back tomorrow and let your covetous heart work you over and tighten up.

So from the Law, from the Prophets, from the Psalms, from the Wisdom Literature and the Gospels, the theme of generosity shows up again and again repeatedly. "Sell your possessions. Give to the needy. Be diligent. Be responsible. Be compassionate. And then be generous. Be generous. Paul summarizes kind of all this, these four points, in one verse, Ephesians 4:28, when he's teaching repentance to the thief. How do you know when a thief is no longer a thief? How do you know when a thief is truly repentant, and he's recovered? Ephesians 4:28, "Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need." When is a thief no

longer a thief? Is it when he gets a job? No. When has he worked through repentance to its very conclusion? Is it when he stops stealing? No. Is it when he gets a job? No. Is it when he's working hard and laboring and appreciating his job? No, no and no. A thief is no longer a thief, he's repented from his thievery, when he converts his heart of covetousness to a heart of generosity, when he's working because he's driven by a generous heart that wants to earn and provide, save up and then share with others. That's when a thief is no longer a thief.

So be diligent, responsible, compassionate, generous. That's just the first sentence in verse 33. Let's look at the second sentence of verse 33, also verse 34. We'll find several more principles for application here. Number five, fifth thing: Be wise and invest for the long term. Be wise and invest for the long term. Verse 33 says, "provide yourselves with money bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys."

Jesus says later, Luke 16:9, "Make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth so that when it fails, they may receive you into eternal dwellings." Same principle that we've

read before, 1 Timothy 6:17-19. "As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy." Listen, "They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share." And then connecting with our text, "Thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life." It's been said before, "You can never outgive God." Trust him in this. Invest your money, your goods, wealth, right now. You can anticipate God outgiving your investment. A heavenly rate of return in ways far beyond what you can ask or imagine.

I just want to insert a brief, but very important word here. The wrong way to apply this text would be to go home this afternoon and go sell that extra piece of furniture, couch, whatever it is, take that money in hand and go to the homeless guy standing on the corner and hand it to him. That would be unwise, not wise. That would be bad stewardship, a bad investment and not the proper execution of a good and wise stewardship. Listen, when we're diligent and hardworking and when God blesses our work and allows us to build wealth, what are we to do with it? Do we just squander it on an emotional

impulse? Are we to give thoughtlessly with no investigation, no follow up? Go to some homeless person holding a sign?

I mean, beloved, we all feel, I feel that, don't you? We all feel that when we drive by, feel the tug at the heartstrings, don't we? Especially when they get the kids involved? Don't be fooled by appearances. Don't be deceived by their cleverness and they are very, very clever. Ask anyone in law enforcement in this church. Anyone in law enforcement at all. They'll set you straight on the con job that's going on out there, what you're actually funding when you give money, put money in their hands. Do you think God is pleased when you give his money that he gave you and invested into funding a drug habit or drunkenness or some kind of abuse?

What does Paul tell the rich, those who have wealth? 1 Timothy 6:18, "They're to do good. They're to be rich in good works to be generous and ready to share." The exercise of a good and wise stewardship is to thoughtfully evaluate the opportunity that is in front of you, to investigate it, to fund what God calls, "Good." Jesus said in Luke 16:11, "If you've not been faithful with unrighteous wealth, who will entrust you with

true riches?" Listen, faithful giving requires wisdom. Wisdom requires not impulsiveness, but thoughtfulness. Wisdom requires you to slow down, evaluate the opportunity. I can say without fear of contradiction here, in the context of seeking the kingdom, Jesus, he's preparing his disciples for future ministry. They can't see that right now, but it's a ministry that is going to go on long after his ascension into heaven. Here we are 2000 years later, right?

So when Jesus says, "Sell, give, invest," he doesn't intend for us to go fund the homeless population of our cities. All his good works, miracles, feeding, healing, his ministry, the ministry of his apostles, the ministry of the 72, the ministry of all the churches in the New Testament, all the way up to us, all his compassion, practical care, physical needs, was accompanied by the message of the Gospel. It's accompanied by preaching, accompanied by the proclamation of the kingdom of God.

So let me just say if you have some extra money and you don't have some personal knowledge of a need, some well-investigated opportunity that you can follow up on, someone who

has a need, a practical need of someone who is suffering physical, listen. The elders have plans for ministry in and through this church. You heard last week at our Member's Meeting, and I was so glad not to be really involved in any of that, but everything that the elders said, you can hear wise, careful, considered, thoughtful stewardship. We need your help. We need your heart for the ministry. We need your investment in ministry. We've, we have community opportunities, reaching out with compassion and counsel to those in need. We want to open up more. We're training people for counseling, for helping people with compassion and thoughtful, careful counsel from the Word of God. We want to open that up.

We know of churches who are struggling with finances who could use a little seed money to encourage them and help them. We're right there with financial counsel and wisdom to evaluate opportunities for them, but we can't pay for all of it. We need to train called men to be competent to handle the Word of God because there are so many untrained and incompetent people peddling the Word of God. So we need to train men. We need to send these men into pastorates, send them to other places as well. There are local, regional, national opportunities and we want to be involved. And all that requires funding.

These opportunities are just waiting for Christians to wake up from slumber, stop supporting bad stuff, bad ministries, stop squandering resources and invest in building the kingdom. To give to trustworthy causes that the elders have investigated and support and encourage, you may not be able to go, but you can help send, right? Let's do that together. Let's do that together.

So be diligent, responsible, compassionate, generous, wise. Here's a sixth point and we're wrapping up here. Number six: Be content and let your heart rest. Six: Be content and let your heart rest. When all of your treasure, everything you count valuable is wrapped up in the safest, most secure bank in the entire universe, where no thief approaches, can't get near, where no moth destroys, you can sleep at night, can't you? You're unincumbered by any of the anxieties that afflict those who are rich in this present world. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." And if your heart is in heaven, your heart is at rest. "Provide for yourselves with moneybags that don't grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For

where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Be diligent, responsible, compassionate, generous, wise, content.

Finally, seventh: Be grateful and let your heart rejoice. Be grateful, let your heart rejoice. You've been granted a kingdom here, all right? Rejoice a little, already. It's decreed for you by God from before the foundation of the world. Listen, this is as secure as it gets. You have unfailing treasure in the heavens, safeguarded by holy angels, attentive cherubim, fiery seraphim are at hand. They are always under the watchful eye of an all-seeing, all-knowing God. God is all-wise, which means what you invest in his kingdom doesn't just sit there, it accrues to your benefit. God accelerates your interest. He drives up your dividends.

Jesus said in Luke 6:38, "Give, it will be given to you." How will it be given, just in the same way I gave it? No "Good measure pressed down, shaken together," so there's no space left in the pressed down grain that he gives you, "running over, that will be poured out into your lap. With the measure you use, it will be measured right back to you." God has given you an infinite share of eternal treasure and he gives you the



privilege of starting right now enjoying the stewardship of that treasure. Your dividends are going to pay off. They're going to last throughout all of eternity. They are never going to grow old, never lose their shine, never lose the value, the interest, never get hacked by hackers.

So be grateful. Give your attention to the treasure laid up in heaven. Instead of looking, instead of rifling through catalogues online for stuff you want to buy, instead of browsing through travel brochures and places online you want to travel to, visit on this decaying planet, use your time, instead, not to stir up a heart of discontent. Use your time instead to search Scripture. Learn more about your reward. Fill your heart with anticipation and joy about this future, this glorious future that awaits you. You have a kingdom and all of its treasure besides. We have, as Peter says, "An inheritance that's imperishable, and undefiled and unfading, it's kept in heave for you." So beloved, let's act like it. Let's start investing with glad and grateful hearts. Amen.

Father, thank you so much for sending the Lord Jesus Christ to tell us what we could not see on our own, to help us to see

what only his eyes can see. When we follow him, we trust him, trust you, Father. When you tell us that you've given us a kingdom, we believe you. But Father, there are sometimes when we are weak in our believing and we don't act like those who are rich beyond imagination. So we pray that you would help us to live like we are the possessors of a kingdom, like you have been eternally gracious to us. And let us live the rest of our lives here on earth seeking the kingdom, seeking your righteousness, knowing all these things will be added to this as well. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.